

## **Proposed Report:**

### **Standards for Homelessness Programs**

Recommended by the State Planning Advisory Committee  
Iowa Council on Homelessness

**Comments accepted until Friday, May 30, 2014, for online posting and council review**  
**Submit comments to [amber.lewis@iowa.gov](mailto:amber.lewis@iowa.gov)**

**Updated June 2, 2014**

*(Includes comments received by the advance deadline of May 30, 2014. Other comments may be shared during the council meeting on Thursday, June 5, 2014, at 3:30 p.m. at Meredith Hall, Drake University.)*

#### **Project Background: Developing the Proposed Standards**

The Iowa Council on Homelessness received a \$50,000 legislative appropriation in 2013 to enhance the administrative capacity of the council. The council elected to use these funds to develop common statewide standards for homeless services providers in the areas of operations, services, and performance. The council selected the State Public Policy Group (SPPG) to coordinate this initiative. SPPG convened a State Planning Advisory Committee, made up of provider representatives from across the state; this committee met for several months in early 2014 to develop recommended standards. These recommended standards were finalized in April 2014 in the report titled, "Standards for Homelessness Programs, Recommended by the State Planning Advisory Committee, Iowa Council on Homelessness."

#### **Process of Review and Adoption**

This report was distributed to members of the Iowa Council on Homelessness for review, prior to the council meeting on May 16, 2014. SPPG shared a presentation during this meeting about the process of developing the recommended standards. An additional presentation and opportunity for discussion is planned during the HUD Iowa Homelessness Peer-to-Peer Symposium, at 12:30 p.m. on June 5, 2014, at Drake University in Des Moines (Meredith Hall). Later that day, at 3:30 p.m., the council will hold a special meeting to vote on adoption of the recommended standards. Members may join this meeting either in person from the same location at Drake University, or by conference call at (866) 685-1580; code 515-725-4942. If quorum is not reached at this meeting, the council agreed to delegate further action on the proposed standards to the Executive Committee.

#### **Process of Comment and Amendment**

Council members expressed interest during the May 16, 2014, meeting in being able to submit comments and possible amendments to the proposed standards prior to voting on the standards. The Iowa Finance Authority agreed to receive and post comments online for the council to review. To ensure posting in advance of the June 5 meeting, comments should be submitted by Friday, May 30, 2014. This document will be updated periodically as comments are received, with a final version posted after this due date above. Comments may be sent to Amber Lewis at [amber.lewis@iowa.gov](mailto:amber.lewis@iowa.gov).

## Comments

### Comment 2: May 30, 2014, Zeb Beilke-McCallum

I want to commend the State Planning Advisory committee and SPPG for talking us further, faster than I could have believed possible -especially considering the verity of homeless programs, services and geographic diversity that Iowa has to offer. I the proposed standards move us toward a better homeless system and better services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. I also believe that ultimately these standards are going to grow or wither based on byin from service providers and that continuing a process by which all who wish to provide feedback, changes or recommendations is able to do so.

So I offer a very few very minor changes that I believe can make the standards even stronger:

Pg 4. On the description of the 4 Coc in Iowa should include: BOS, Pottawattamie County as part of the Omaha region, City of Des Moines/Polk county, Sioux City and Dakota/Woodbury Counties.

Pg 10.

1.20 I think these trainings make a great deal of sense, I have many questions about implementation, who provides these trainings? Who decides which trainings are applicable? Perhaps it would be a good first step to include questions in the ESG/CoC application about staff training however. Additionally, it would have been nice to see DV/SA included in the training topics as it impacts nearly all homeless women either as the cause of their homelessness or leaves them more vulnerable to it.

1.27 good to notify clients both orally and in writing, sometimes/especially at intake a client can get buried under information and best to give them multiple opportunities to process information.

1.29 Perhaps this is covered in standard 1.30 but prioritizing compliance with the Fair Housing Act makes sense to me, as it is perhaps the most over looked by some housing service agencies.

Pg11.

Top of the page -I really want to thank the State Planning Advisory Committee for recognizing, homeless individuals and families right to allow, limit or refuse release of personal information. Supporting the implementation of this is going to be vita.

2.4 recommend including "or Domestic Violence status to that list, as required by the Violence Against Women Act.

2.10 participate in the coordinated intake approved by the local CoC –include "except as necessary by DV programs to maintain confidentiality"

### Comment 1: May 23, 2014, David Binner

In reviewing the Standards for Homelessness Programs, I note that there is one area that is missing (financial benchmarking) and that would be part of my recommendation. The rationale for the recommendation is that the Operations Standards do not incorporate any financial analysis benchmarks to assist in any peer-to-peer operational review and promote greater operational awareness and financial efficiency. This financial benchmarking will highlight the

attributes of the five regional districts that this document espouses and would assist in regional comparison.

My recommendation would fall within two sub points: with my comments identified in underlined red text

1.7 have a budget approved by Board of Directors. The approved budget will report on the overall bed capacity (or square footage if appropriate) and also report on the budgeted bed / SF capacity as a part of the annual projections. For example, budget is based on 25 beds in the budget year however capacity is at 28 beds.

1.9 have an audit or an independent review of the financial statements by a CPA. Such audit or annual review would either, in the primary presentation of financial results or in footnotes to the financial statements, present (a) biannual occupancy data (b) group the operating expenses into separate categories of (i) fixed expenses which includes insurance and any appropriate taxes (ii) utilities – including gas/fuel, electric power, and water and sewer (iii) payroll and benefits, (iv) repairs and maintenance, (v) food and dietary – no payroll (vi) administrative (does not include payroll and (vii) other – miscellaneous. The independent audit would indicate total capacity for period in review (as well as aforementioned occupancy), total FTE (full time equivalents) and if possible total building area.

The rationale for recommendations is (1) most of these categories utilities, payroll, food and dietary, repairs and maintenance would have their own regional costs due to their geography and economy and segmentation would accommodate a better peer to peer analysis based on data drawn from that five regional planning areas; (2) much of the nonprofit financial expense data is presented in a similar format (except for dietary) across the country (3) provides consistency in making requests for additional funding as it highlights and segregates financial needs related to unexpected energy supply shocks, food and dietary supply shocks, changes in payroll or unexpected repairs and maintenance expenses.

Two other attributes for this recommendation is (1) as we plan to complete the incorporation of a non-profit entity to provide resources for homelessness in Iowa this could likely be some areas that investors might have further inquiries and (2) as one approaches awarding existing financial resources via competitive applications this might assist in further analysis. I know financial resources are tight for everyone however giving managers additional regional financial tools and benchmarks might promote better synergy and resource allocation.